

# Carbusters

magazine

June-August 2006  
No. 27

## ReGulars

- 4 Letters  
Cannons of Carfreedom; Half Man,  
Half Bike; Awed by Amsterdam
- 6 Car Cult Review  
Eating Pavement; I Hate You, Mommy;  
Turning on Cars; Cross the Road and Die
- 8 World News  
Funding the Bicycle Capital; Silent,  
But Deadly; Bustin' the Bottleneck...
- 10 Action  
Riders of the Apocalypse; Guardian Angels;  
Take the Tooker; Lost Souls
- 12 Member Group Profile  
Club der Autofreien der Schweiz  
Zurich, Switzerland
- 21 Cutting Your Car Use: The Column  
Anna Semlyen explains how we can cut costs  
by giving up our cars.
- 25 Studies & Reports  
Congested Roads; Flight of Fancy;  
Taxi Rides; Ambient Air Quality
- 26 Book Reviews  
Car Sick by Lynn Sloman;  
Planet Walker by John Francis



Front cover design: Tanja Eskola



Back cover design: Ingrid Hanusová

## Features

- 13 Fueling the Future,  
or Feeding our Obsession?  
In this seven-page feature, Carbusters takes an in-depth look at  
alternative fuels, including interviews with Helen Buckland, Aat  
Peterse and Jim Motavalli
- 20 Buyer Beware  
Debra Efromyson argues that cars, like cigarette packaging,  
should have warning labels to deter use.
- 22 Top 10 Myths About  
the Carfree Movement: Part II  
Randy Ghent takes on the skeptics and the  
critics in the second of a two-part series.
- 24 Re-Cycling History  
Olly Powell asks: Will anyone agree to travel sans  
automobile, next summer, from Beijing to Paris?

# The Road to Carfreedom

The world consumes two barrels of oil for every barrel discovered. The era of easy oil is over. It took us 125 years to use the first trillion barrels of oil. We'll use the next trillion in 30.

You might have found these sorts of statements in our peak oil issue last year, or included in any number of environmental publications and reports. But the ones above are from Chevron advertisements, part of their [Willyoujoinus.com](http://Willyoujoinus.com) campaign. On the one hand, we can just dismiss such well-funded talk as greenwash, but why is it that the language of Chevron and environmental organisations are sounding more and more similar?

As peak oil enters the mainstream, with films like *Syriana* and a *Time* magazine cover story, and hot-shot Hollywood celebrities tout the benefits of their new hybrid cars, a curious consensus is emerging around so-called sustainable transport.

Chevron's campaign – Will You Join Us? – perfectly illustrates this emerging consensus. We all need to come together, goes the logic, to solve humanity's insatiable demand for energy.

Yet these campaigns inevitably do not question our energy demands; they are accepted as givens, and the challenge is to find a solution to fill the demands. But when the alternative to consumption is more consumption, have we really found an alternative? When the alternative to driving a car is driving a car, what kind of



alternative  
have we  
found?

We begin to  
fall into the trap  
where when we try to  
emphasise the carfree  
alternative, the inevitable  
response goes like, well, sure,  
but these cars are cleaner than the  
older cars. All other things aside, is that  
not a good deal to have a car which you can  
cycle behind that doesn't turn your lungs black?

I am always a bit stuck in these situations. Yes,  
of course, it is better to have a tidy, Toyota hybrid  
cruising the roads than a beat-up Trabant that  
leaves a trail of pollution thick like butter. But it is  
this kind of reasoning that shuts down any effective  
debate about alternatives, and how our cities are  
structured. Yes, the clean car is better, but is it  
worth all of the money and research lavished upon  
it? And at what costs to public transport, cycling  
infrastructure, and public space improvements?

Randy Ghent takes this idea on, and others, in  
his second part of his two part look at the myths  
about the carfree movement.

In this issue, we would like to be that voice  
which does not gleefully promote hybrids, nor  
embrace the techno-fixes on offer from both

#### Editorial Collective:

Vincent Aronio, Anna Domenech, Randy Ghent, Steven Logan, Stephan von Pohl

#### Other World Carfree Network Staff:

Arie Farnam, Kamila Blazková, Roeland Kuijper, Joao Lopes, Radka Tichavská

#### Contributors:

Bridget Brown, Kamila Bergen, Jan Desrosiers, Debra Efroymson, Tanja Eskola, Ingrid Hanusová, Anna Semlyen, Megan Shea, Dieter Steiner, Henry Studer

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Please send letters, article proposals, artwork, and photos to:

Carbusters, Krátká 26

100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic

tel: +(420) 274-810-849

fax: +(420) 274-772-017

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[editors@carbusters.org](mailto:editors@carbusters.org)

[www.carbusters.org](http://www.carbusters.org)

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# letters



David Nolt

## Dangerous Life

Carbusters is always a very uplifting read in the evenings after I have risked life and limb cycling amongst the urban 4x4s [SUVs]. I don't suppose Brighton has the most 4x4s in the world, but it must be up there!

"Adam"

## Re: Routemaster Blues

In response to Joel McKim's letter regarding the sad demise of the Routemaster bus, I can say that I agree that aesthetics, etc., would perhaps have preserved the lovely old Routemaster. However, one point he fails to mention is that, unlike the low-floor buses replacing them, Routemasters are pretty much impossible for wheelchair users to get onto without a lot of help, and people with mobility impairments, small children and buggies often found them hard to use or were left standing by the catch-me-if-you-can style of hopping on and off. Public transport should not just be for the able-bodied.

Sarah Irving  
Manchester, UK

## Critical Mass in Prague

This April in Prague, I participated in the first Critical Mass [bike ride] in my life.

Before that, I didn't even know what it was about. It was a really nice ride through the city; we were almost 400 cyclists. Some people carried placards such as "You Also Have Legs," "One Less Car," or "We Ride in a Carrot" [ed.: actual translation from Czech might be more like "Fueled by Carrot Power," but this is nice, too.].

And the behaviour of the police, the riders, and also the drivers was good all along the way. The final destination was a cool club where the participants could listen to a concert, talk with the people they met during the ride and celebrate the success of the event.

As I could see, Critical Mass is both a way to fight for a better city and have a nice party!

So if you were a car driver blocked by a Critical Mass, just imagine all the spaces that could be free without all these cars.

We are sorry if you were in a traffic jam today, but this is becoming more and more

usual nowadays. We are sorry if we contributed to your delay, but please recognise that the cyclists are ignored, obstructed and physically threatened all the time, every day. We're so sorry you're not already out here on your bicycle riding with us! But we invite you to join Critical Mass next time.

Remember, every day is a good day to take the bike and leave the car parked!

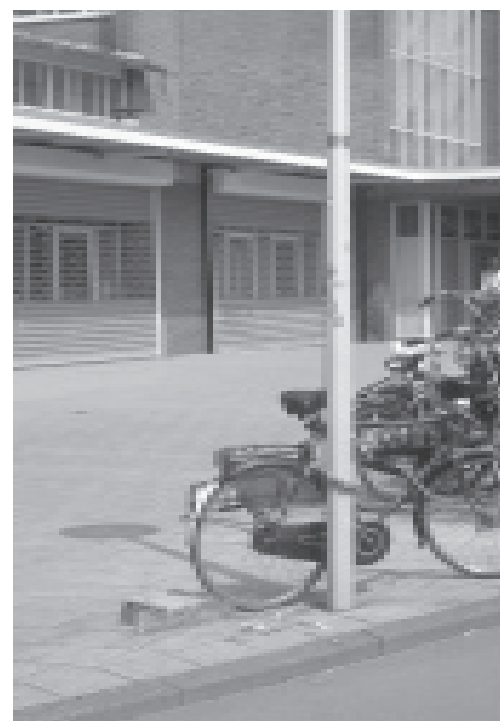
Berto Mogio  
Vigo, Spain

## Awed by Amsterdam

On a recent visit to Amsterdam, I was stunned by the bike culture there and wanted to share my impressions so that people can make every city look like this someday.

Walking along the streets, you can't even see the railings along the canals because they are covered in bikes.

The nice thing about Dutch bikes is that you can sit on them with a straight back, unlike the mountain bikes which I mostly see elsewhere in the world. Another thing that really surprised me is that the cyclists



This guy cruising by Amsterdam's Muiderpoort Station

are wearing leisure clothing. I rarely saw a Dutch cyclist in those tight and colourful bike suits.

The bike lanes outnumber the car lanes. Parking spaces for bikes or even bike lanes are put on places where cars would normally park. Bikes are used by the young and old. Children and dogs are transported on little chairs or baskets on the front or back of the bike. The same places are being used to carry groceries.

I even saw special holders on the side of the bike to carry complete children's strollers. For a bike freak like me, a woman carefully balancing her bike loaded with groceries while she is lifting her two kids out of their little chairs should be crowned queen of the street. But this is no exception, there are people everywhere trans-orting goods and people on their bikes.

One thing that stole my heart was the bak-fiets, a kind of hauling bike with a big kind of box in front of the bike [ed.: see photo below]. Readers can have a look at Bakfiets.nl. The website is in Dutch but when you click on "fotos" you get to see a crazy series of pictures about how the box is used: from four happy kids together to a groom riding with his bride.



Lisa Logan

I believe that these kind of bikes will be or at least should be a part of the future.

Robert Regout

Roermond, the Netherlands

### Bury Your Guns and Fight for Carfree Streets

While traveling in Cuba this past April, my companion and I were thrilled to promenade along the designated "pedestrian-only" streets we came across in almost every city and town that we visited.

Coming from Toronto where there is not a single pedestrian-only street, we felt compelled to photograph the unique car barriers used in Havana [photo right]. Cannons that were once used to protect Cubans from invasion now protect them from cars.

Lisa Logan

Toronto, Canada

### Hmm...

On May 5, the Carbusters Office of Intellect received a series of challenging treatises from one John T. Schiffer, Jr. of Plant City, Florida. The papers, as he writes, are "the first part of the newest in today's paradigm shift showing the transference of today's fast car/truck and driver."

Since we unfortunately cannot print the papers in their entirety, our top ten favourite phrases will have to suffice, as follows, in order of appearance. The reader may not be able to make any sense, as such, out of the material, yet the text may provide a stimulating glimpse at the mind that lies behind it. - ed.

1. A cue or stigma for things is that strange auth-ority of invisible things to make themselves real.
2. The one person that is at absolute stop more than most

Robert Regout



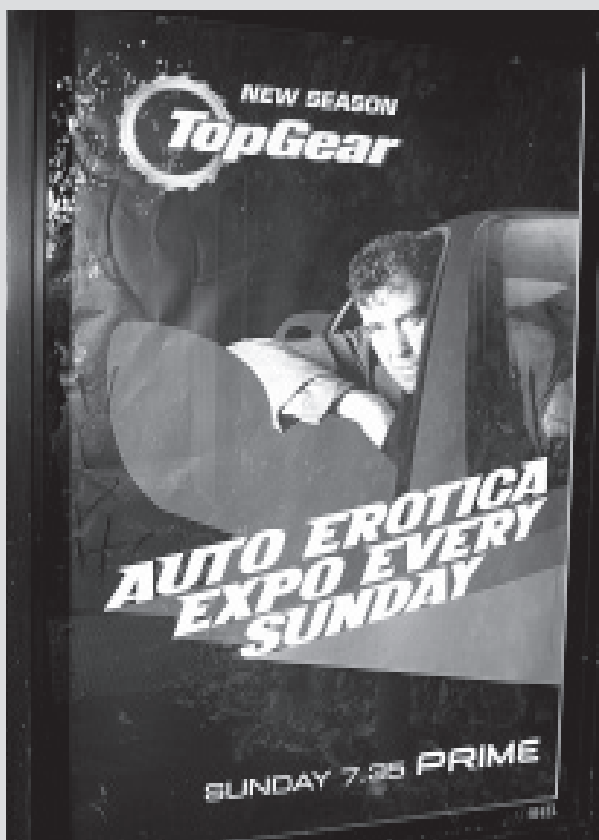
the coolest bike in town. Bikes at can be parked either outside the station or in a bike box (pictured in



"Harleys are like no other bikes. You feel like a hero when you're riding one. My heart beats so fast when I ride mine, I always have to smoke a cigarette and drink some water afterward."



## CAR CULT REVIEW



### What Happens When You Turn Your Car On?

One of the enduring myths of car culture is the teenage sexual experience in the back seat of father's beat-up Buick. The car was not much to show off at the drive-in, but the backseat was big enough for clandestine encounters.

Our love affair with the car continues, but with a different focus. Auto-eroticism is on the rise in the UK and North America. There is no need for a partner, just the slick leather seats to keep the self-pleasurer comfortable.

People are realising that they do not need someone else to satisfy their desires. They just

slide back on the seat into a comfortable position, close their eyes and imagine the coolest, freest highway.

The British International Auto Show, in a cutting-edge bit of market research, found that car owners think their cars have personalities and can get upset, just like regular people. Women give their cars pet names and men discuss their problems with their automobiles.

"We know that Brits are passionate about their cars, and it's great to see that the bond is so deep," says auto show organiser Kirsty Adams. "At the new-look British International Motor Show in London we are creating a great day out with something

for everyone, and hopefully providing a focus for all this love!"

On a quiet evening, over dinner, a couple thinks over their holiday plans and decide to go solo:

"Darling, pick me up a bottle of that new Knock'er Loose lubricant, I am in the mood for a little adventure to the hills this weekend."

"Of course, sweetie, let's take separate vacations this year; I'll take the Porsche and you the Jaguar."

"Grrrrr."

### Cross the Road and Die

Have you ever noticed when the pedestrian signal finally turns green, a second later the sign is again flashing "don't walk" and you are caught scampering across the street?

On many busy and wide suburban streets, there is not much time for an able-bodied person to cross the street. On the ex-urban streets of the United States, there is rarely enough time for people to get to the other side of the road before their bodies are reduced to a bloody pulp. There is probably a joke about it: Why did the pedestrian cross the road? She didn't because there wasn't enough time.

But 82-year-old Mayvis Coyle's US\$114 ticket for crossing the road is no joke. She said that she started into the intersection, bag of groceries in hand, when the signal was green. But waiting on the other side was a Los Angeles cop ready to hand her a ticket for obstructing traffic.

"I think it's completely outrageous," said Coyle in an AP article. "He treated me like a six-year-old, like I don't know what I'm doing."

Los Angeles police sergeant Mike Zaboski said that "pedestrian accidents" are happening far too often. Ticketing pedestrians is the police response to dangerous

# Automatons

by Andy Singer

Foley, managing director of the China division for Harley-Davidson Asia, told AP, "and we expect the same things...here."

The general manager for the dealership, Hollis Zhao, says that Harley-Davidson symbolises freedom and shouldn't be just for Americans.

In Beijing, however, it is prohibited to ride motorcycles on the streets or highways. The Harley-Davidson bikes, says AP, will cost between US\$12,000 and \$37,500. With the average annual Beijing salary hovering around \$2,200, Harley-Davidson is unlikely to become the people's bike anytime soon.

## It Eats Pavement

Car magazines are full of metaphors and similes that turn cars into animals or sex objects, lavishing unending praise on them.

The Audi A3 eats pavement, writes European Car magazine in an article affectionately called "The Money Shot." "Along the lonesome mountain byway high above Los Angeles... the Audi A3 laid down one of the smokiest, most fearsome

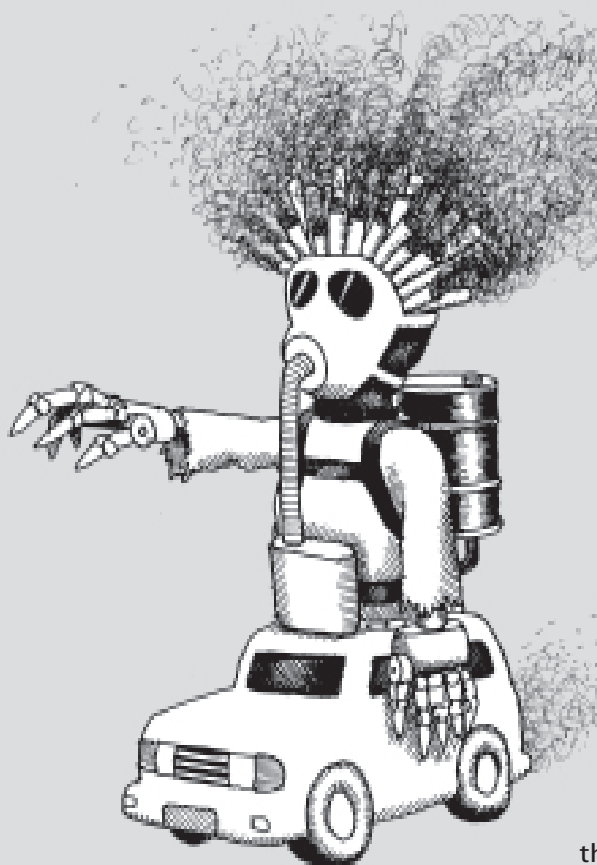
pedestrians like Coyle.

Keep watch as police start ticketing trees for obstructing billboards, animals for getting in the way of highways and children for having fun.

## Feel the Vibrations

It might be worth spending a few moments of a busy day asking yourself what communism and Harley-Davidson have in common? A well-known brand name? It is reported that the fall of communism in the Eastern Bloc was primarily due to Gorbachev's desperate need to ride a Harley-Davidson across America.

In China, the first Harley-Davidson shop opened in April in Beijing. "All around the world, [Harley] has been synonymous with freedom, open roads, raw power and good times," David



*Dangerously loud toy.  
Prolonged exposure will cause hearing loss.*

*New York Public Interest  
Research Group  
Trouble in Toyland*



Velotrixi.cz

and  
bike flats

Long scarves are fashionable these days, especially among the cycling set. Velotrixi was launched April 1 in Prague. The pedicabs run through the city centre, and have electric engines that kick in when the

## The Americas

### Europe

replication of so-called  
locker parking

#### Funding the Bicycle Capital

THE NETHERLANDS - Amsterdam has budgeted EUR 100 million to entice and keep its citizens riding bicycles over the next five years. One of the aims of the four-year plan is that by 2010, 37% of Amsterdam residents should use a bike for local urban trips.

Over the last 20 years, the number of cyclists severely injured in Amsterdam decreased by 35%, while bicycle use increased 20%. To be successful, says the city, bicycles must be made a high priority, and amenities must be made to make bicycle commuting convenient, safe and quick. This will involve increasing bicycle traffic flow and bike safety.

The policy will also target bike thieves. Every year, about 75,000 people lose their bicycles in Amsterdam. With anti-theft campaigns, extra measures and severe penalties, Amsterdam has managed to ease the problem.

Now, only one out of 10 bicycles get stolen, instead of one in five. In 2010 these statistics have to be improved to one out of 15 bicycles. Better (guarded) bicycle parking though the

## Jane Jacobs, 1916-2006

Jane Jacobs, activist and author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, passed away in her hometown of Toronto, Canada, on April 25 at the age of 89.

Starting in the early 1960s,



will help realise this aim.

## Where There are Trees, There Will be Roads

SPAIN - In September 2004, the Madrid city council, led by Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, launched work to be carried out on the M30 ring road that circles the inner Madrid area. It connects to the main Spanish national highways that radiate out from the capital. According to the city council, construction should finish at the end of this year to the tune of EUR 3.9 billion. Connections will be improved and about 26 km of this extremely busy artery will be buried underground.

Calle M30 is making a lot of noise. According to the United Left opposition group in the city council, municipal excavators have destroyed about 800 metres of the so-called Terraces of the Manzanares River



Lisa Logan

More than 300 people fit into the "El Camello" Havana public transportation bus, named for the two

inside an area highly protected for its archaeological and paleontological value.

About 20,000 trees, with an average age of 35 years, are being cut down. This is happening mainly during the night, to avoid demonstrations from neighbours.

According to the grassroots association Plataforma M30, the cost of the project could reach EUR 10 billion, as long-term financing and unforeseen expenses are not taken into account in the official figures. Since the city cannot afford to close the road while work is proceeding, temporary diversions and signaling have led to a 30% increase in accidents from 2004 to 2005.

At the same time, the city

council announced that, as of 2008, all vehicles more than 10 years old will be banned from the city centre.

Arturo González Aizpiri is the General Secretary for combating pollution at the Spanish Ministry for the Environment. In an interview with El País on February 10, he declared

Cars must be exiled from the centre of the cities.

writes author Jim Kunstler, Jacobs led a brave revolt against the dogmas and destructive practices of Modernist city planners who had wrecked one city after another in their neurotic campaign for urban purification.



# Action!



## Riders of the Apocalypse

On February 4, a group of Manchester, UK, cyclists pissed off with the ever increasing amount of dirty, dangerous and downright ridiculous 4x4s which are accelerating climate Armageddon, took to their bikes and donned skeleton outfits to shame SUV drivers in Manchester, UK.

Dressed as skeletons and wearing high visibility jackets saying: "4x4 = POLLUTION" they cycled along Deansgate surrounding 4x4s as they drove (and sat in traffic mostly), letting the driver and everyone around know just what they thought about their choice of transport.

The fancy dress, slogans on their backs and the sight of something different going on attracted lots of attention (it's not every day a skeleton rides around Manchester).

Most of it was positive, except from the drivers who tried to escape (in shame), only to be swiftly followed down side streets. Numerous parked 4x4s were given "Poor Vehicle Choice" parking tickets, including Satan's

own car of choice, the Hummer.

This was part of Saturday Club's month of actions on transport, which included "Get Clued Up," a night of films, food and information about the problems with cars and the safe, clean alternatives.

This great group meets most Saturdays and organises many actions like this one. So, if you are a Manchester citizen, just

join them!

- Saturday Club

## Plane Stupid Launches Action at Heathrow

On April 3, some environmental activists from Plane Stupid blocked the entrance to the British Airports Authority's (BAA) office at Heathrow Airport, preventing employees from entering. They used chains and piping to close off the building for more than two hours, having unfurled a "No to Airport Expansion" banner.

The aim of the action was to support local residents whose homes would be demolished if a third runway gets the go ahead. Many of these people held banners and brought breakfast for the activists.

A Plane Stupid spokesman said, "In 60 years, Heathrow has grown from being a small local airport into a climate change factory. BAA's plan to expand the airport further puts them in the premier league of climate change criminals. BAA can be assured; today's action is just the start of our direct action campaign to stop airport expansion."

As police removed the demonstrators, Plane Stupid pledged further protests against expansion of the airport. Six



activists were arrested, expected to be charged with aggravated

trespass.

## Guardian Angels

On April 20 in Prague, pedestrians and cyclists were a little safer because of the guardian angels watching over them at dangerous intersections and crosswalks throughout the city.

The action was organised by Auto\*mat, a Prague-based initiative, to call attention to the unsafe streets and to let drivers know that they need to be less aggressive.

Volunteers dressed as angels, including two World Carfree Network staff members, stood at the busiest intersections from 6 am to 9 am and from 3 pm to 5 pm.

"Normally you can't see me but it is a special day, and I have become visible," one angel said.

The angels placed themselves in view of traffic cameras, so that they'd be sure to feature on TV traffic reports in the morning and evening. Journalists did interviews with some of the angels and wrote about the action in the newspapers.

In the evening, the angels mounted bikes and took the lead in the monthly Critical Mass ride, followed by over 300 other cyclists.

## Swift Victory in Budapest

In early February, about 100 Budapest cyclists went on a bike ride, delivering a petition to the mayor of the city's District 5.

Up 'til then, the district council had shown no interest in bike routes. But after the petition was delivered, the council voted 20 to 0 in favour of building bike routes in the city centre. Yet another bike victory story in Budapest! You can see photos at <<http://criticalmass.hu/?q=node/298>>.

Also, in mid-March, cyclists went on a "tour de voks" (voting tour), pedaling to the headquarters of the four main political parties and delivering a 12-point cyclists' wish list. Despite very minimal advertising for this event, over 1,000 people participated, and in some cases the wish list was accepted by prominent

politicians.

- Justin Hyatt

## Lost Souls

The mayor of Granada, Spain, justified the elimination of an important bike lane by saying that people don't like to cycle to work. So on the mornings of April 1 and 2, some of these non-existing cyclists organised a ride of ghosts on that dead bike lane (just to make the mayor's words true).

Many citizens saw ghosts (and many normal riders) cycling, but they were not real! It was a collective hallucination! These ghosts wore some messages such as "We Are Not Here" and "If You Think You Are Seeing Cyclists, Consult Your Doctor."

The bike lane is only a small thing, but its elimination means yet more space for cars. The ghost

cyclists also wanted to call for free, safe, sustainable mobility, less pollution, less noise and a city designed for people rather than cars. Granada is the most polluted city in Andalusia, a region in southern Spain.

## Ciclovias: Carfree Sundays

Ciclovias are the Carfree Sundays that reclaim streets in many Latin American cities for several hours each week. The idea is to create an attractive space for cycling, walking, playing, skating...and to encourage positive street life.

These are events for the whole family, representing a major improvement in quality of life, since it means more leisure, relaxation, community living, meeting people, social integration, physical activity and clean air.

The world biggest ciclovía is in



Yvonne Vambrick

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# member Group profile

by Dieter Steiner

A look at official Swiss transportation policy reveals an amazing fact: It bases its activities and measures on the assumption that practically everybody drives a car. There is lots of talk about sustainable development, but the only issues addressed are improvements in technical efficiency like lowering fuel consumption and air pollution, and encouraging people to travel more often by public transport than by car.

The much more fundamental question regarding people's motives in whether to own a car and the possibilities of influencing such motives have never been addressed. This, however, is very decisive with respect to people's mobility behaviour: Statistical data show that a person living in a carfree household drives on average only about one-fifth of the kilometres driven by someone in a car-owning household, suggesting that "carfree" does not mean that one never drives or sits in a car, but simply that one does not own a car personally. This person will compensate by using public transport more often, but overall this still means that the mobility-generated yearly external costs will be lower by an estimated CHF 1,000 (EUR 670) per year.

Actually, the extent of car ownership in Swiss households has only surfaced with the mobility microcensus of the Federal Agency for Statistics conducted now every five years. It turns out that 20% of all households (about one million people) and up to 40% of households in large cities are carfree. The bad news, however, is that this percentage is shrinking. It is all the more urgent, then, that we look at this segment of the population and develop ideas about how to support carfree lifestyles.



CAS president Beat von Scarpatetti demonstrates that being carfree does not mean never sitting in a

In December 2004 we founded the Club of the Carfree People of Switzerland (Club der Autofreien der Schweiz, abbreviation CAS). Presently we have around 700 members. It is our goal to give carfree people an identity and a voice and to advertise the carfree lifestyle. Carfree living is much more sustainable: Giving up your car can reduce your CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30%.

But it is economically beneficial as well. Suppose you have a family with two teenage children and two cars. By getting rid of the vehicles, you can save up to CHF 12,000 (EUR 8,000) per year without reducing mobility. There is a dense public transportation network in Switzerland and you can buy a general pass for the whole year.

So far, the authorities have occasionally given bonuses to car-owning people for driving less or for driving in a less damaging way. Recently, Zurich car owners who deposited their licence plates for a month received free public transport for that period. And last year, the Swiss Federal Office of Energy announced that people buying a car with an energy-saving label on a randomly selected day would get

a discount.

In our view, of course, such strategies are wrong; it is the carfree people who should be rewarded. Since they are a lesser burden on society, CAS hopes to obtain for its members, in the long run, discounts from city governments, transport and tourist organisations, and insurance companies.

That may prove to be difficult. Still, last year we obtained free day-passes for the first 150 CAS members, donated by the transport organisation of northwestern Switzerland. And this year seven ecologically minded hotels have agreed to give CAS members a 10% discount during a particular time of the year.

Some years ago, a survey showed that a change in one's personal situation was the most important reason for getting rid of their car. But about one-third of the respondents said living without a car was a lifestyle preference and a conscious decision. Only a few people became carfree for purely environmental reasons.

Our philosophy is not so much one of condemning car addiction

# Fueling the Future, or Feeding our

by Henry Studer

In recent months, the car industry has been canonising itself by pointing out its efforts for alternative fuels, energy efficiency and every little gadget that will help reduce some of the pollution which cars themselves have been causing over the past century. Also, the European Union has declared that it wants biofuels that come from renewable resources to make up almost 6% of total fuel for transport.

By the end of 2007, writes Reuters, the EU will be producing six million tonnes of biofuel, up 50% from current levels. In 2005, the US Department of Energy produced 3.4 billion gallons of ethanol, accounting for 14% of all corn produced in the US. However, this represents less than 1% of total vehicle use.

After opening the auto show in Geneva, the Swiss minister of transport cold-shouldered the hot sport cars and powerful off-roaders to inform himself at the booth of the new ethanol-driven automobile. The conclusion of the news magazine Facts, and many others, is overly hasty: There are no reasons left to demonise the automobile.

On the one hand, the Traffic Club of Switzerland (VCS) quotes an analysis from the Ministry of Environment (BUWAL) from 1998, illustrating that, considering all life cycle processes, biodiesel and ethanol are worse than their fossil substitutes. This

judgement depends on the weighting of the relevant criteria like energy balance, CO<sub>2</sub> savings, agricultural impacts and emissions such as NO<sub>x</sub>.

David Pimentel's studies also suggest that more fossil fuel energy is needed to produce ethanol than is contained in the ethanol. Further, he says that in comparison with fossil fuels, "plants and trees do not collect enough solar energy to supply humans with their needs."

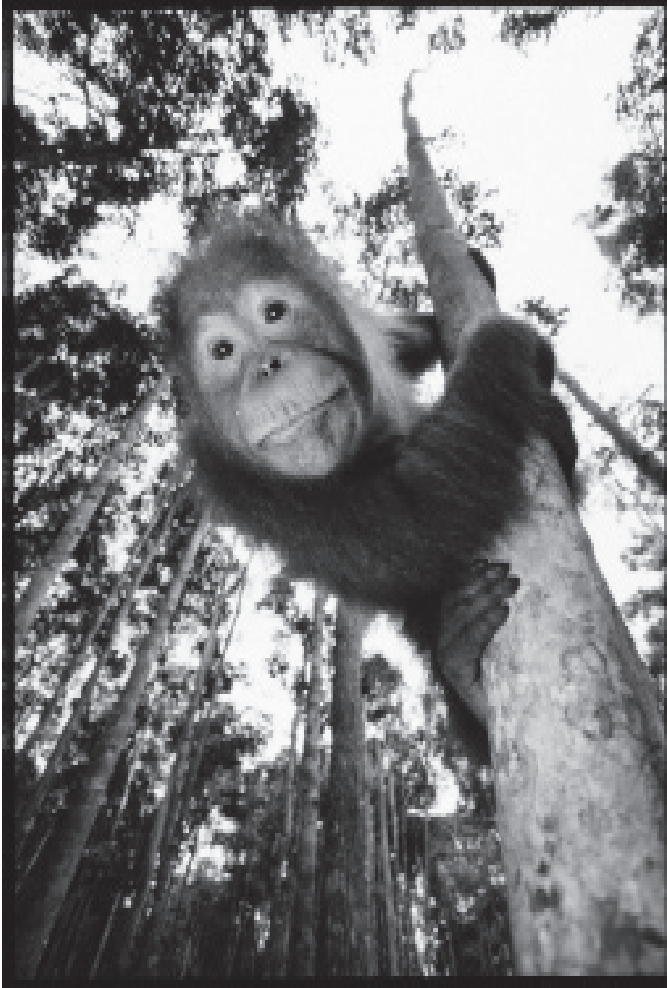
Now energy is literally harvested on fields, which is a renewable process if fossil fuel inputs are eliminated. Farmers are starting to see a new potential for their fallow land. The German Association for



Plant Oils calculates that only



# Big Questions About



Nick Lyon, Cockroach.org.uk

## Helen Buckland

Buckland is the UK Coordinator of the Sumatran Orangutan Society and author of *The Oil for Ape Scandal: How Palm Oil is Threatening Orangutan Survival*. She believes that companies are getting their biofuel fix at the expense of the forests of Malaysia and Indonesia and those who live in and off these natural areas.

CB

Studies show that our obsession with cars affects the poor in our communities the most because, for example, the poor live near busy roads. How is this situation similar with biofuels, and in particular the growth of palm oil crops?

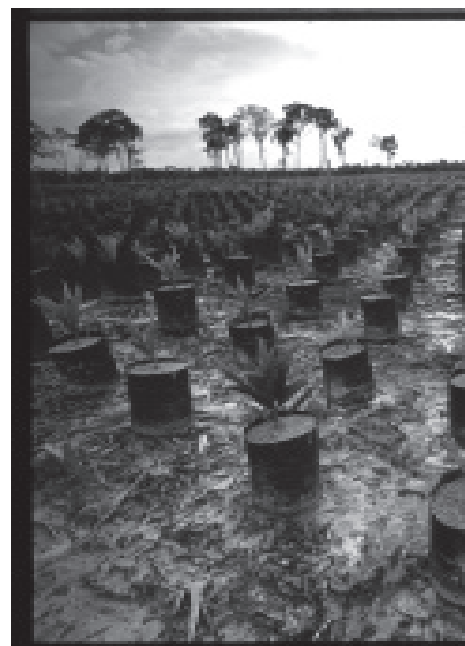
HB

The economic benefits of the palm oil industry to major producer countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia cannot be denied. It is thought that over 4.5 million people, or 2% of Indonesia's population, rely on the success of the palm oil estates, whether as plantation workers or further along the supply chain, and the industry generates significant export revenue. However, such an analysis fails to take account of the substantial social and environmental costs of palm oil development, including the

ecological price of removing forest cover, as well as pollution and damage to watercourses. An estimated 100 million people in Indonesia rely on forests and forest products for their livelihoods, 40 million of whom are indigenous peoples. Many are suffering at the hands of the palm oil industry and have lost access to their land and forest resources. Plantation workers also often have to deal with poor living and working conditions and exploitative wages.

Social conflict and human rights abuse have often been associated with the development of the palm oil industry. Plantations are often established on traditionally owned land and on agricultural land used by communities to grow food at a subsistence level. Traditional land rights rarely have official documentation to support them, so when the bulldozers arrive, indigenous communities have very little leverage.

The removal of forest cover destroys previous local economies, which are often based on the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, such as seeds, honey, rubber, rattan, medicinal plants and fruit. This leads to a reliance on a single export-oriented commodity that is vulnerable to international price fluctuations. In many cases, indigenous people have little choice but to surrender their land and undertake poorly paid work labouring on the plantations, but setting up a new plantation does not necessarily guarantee employment for local people, as migrant labourers are often brought in by the plantation companies. The pesticides and herbicides used in palm oil plantations, as well as palm oil mill effluent, can leach and flow into water bodies, devastating aquatic ecosystems, and making water unfit for human consumption.



Can large-scale investment in biofuels benefit local farmers?

## Carbusters asks three experts their views on the biofuel hype and the state of biofuel development around the world.

There have been several news reports recently on the increasing demand in Europe for biofuels, and the resulting drive to expand palm oil plantations in Indonesia. Although this has been accompanied by an increase in the cost of palm oil on the world market, this is unlikely to trickle down to the plantation workers harvesting the palms. Palm oil plantations do provide employment, but while increased demand acts as a catalyst for expansion, it does not necessarily provide sustainable livelihoods for local farmers, nor acceptable working conditions.

The EU strategy on biofuels states that EU development policy will help developing countries while addressing environmental concerns. Do you think that the pressing need to reduce fossil fuel consumption will override these environmental and human rights issues?

The current EU Biofuels Directive calls for member states to promote the use of biofuels, and sets

minimum targets regarding the proportion of biofuels and renewable fuels that are placed on the market, specifically 2% by 2005, increasing to 5.75% by 2010. This will represent an increase of 12 million tons from the 2.6 million tons consumed in 2005. European governments striving

to meet targets for carbon emission reductions tend to focus entirely on identifying alternative energy sources rather than providing incentives for reductions in fossil fuel usage, for example,

“  
The forests and indigenous peoples of Indonesia do not have the luxury of time to wait while European companies work out the business case for supporting sustainable  
”

in terms of car use and air travel. As the biofuels market expands, the forest is shrinking in oil crop producing countries such as Indonesia as swathes of land are converted to oil palm plantations. The Indonesian government has recently announced plans to convert three million hectares of land to

palm oil plantations along the Indonesia/Malaysia border on the island of Borneo. This project will devastate the region's biodiverse forests and have severe implications for the hydrology of the whole island. One of the justifications given for this huge project is increasing international demand for palm oil, and this includes the biofuels market in Europe.

The UK relies on voluntary action and initiatives when it comes to corporate

responsibility for the environmental and human rights impacts of a company's business practices. I think the job of promoting sustainable production of biofuel crops, and creating a market for oils produced in a non-destructive manner at the other end of the supply chain, is left to the NGOs that are concerned with the environmental and human rights issues. Until there is appropriate legislation, or some real incentives to adopt “green” policies and practices, changes will happen slowly. The forests and indigenous peoples of Indonesia do not have the luxury of time to wait while European companies work out the business case for supporting sustainable production of biofuels.

Can palm oil be grown in a manner that does not harm the environment nor the indigenous people living there?

In November 2005, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) launched their “Principles and Criteria for the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil.” For some time, a number of stake-holders along the palm oil supply chain, from oil palm growers, refiners and traders to NGOs concerned with the unsustainable growth of the industry in Indonesia and Malaysia have deliberated on the RSPO principles. The criteria therefore represent a very positive step, although practical implementation and verification may not be entirely straightforward.

There are a number of crucial factors to consider when assessing the ecological impacts of palm oil development, the majority of which are addressed by the RSPO criteria.

For example, there is a huge amount of



## AN OIL-DEPENDENT WORLD



Aat Peterse

In Southeast Asia, palm oil development has led to the conversion of huge tracts of unprotected lowland forests – and even protected areas, such as the famous Tanjung

Puting National Park, are now being  
☐ degazetted and their borders redrawn to make way for oil palms! Peat swamp  
☐ forests are not ideal sites for palm oil cultivation, but companies will apply for concessions on this land when other forested land is scarce, as profits can still be made from harvesting valuable timber species during land clearance operations. Peat swamp forests are a significant carbon sink, with some swamps representing 5,000-10,000 years of carbon accumulation. The 1997-98 forest fires, predominantly started

degraded land available for palm oil cultivation in Indonesia, and future plantation development should be redirected to these areas in preference to high conservation value forests. Some estimates put the amount of idle land at tens of millions of hectares. This may be abandoned agricultural land, or areas of scrub, as well as areas where “cowboy” palm oil companies have applied for concession rights, cleared the commercially valuable timber and then disappeared without planting a single palm. In one province alone, almost three million hectares of land have been cleared in the name of palm oil development, but now stand barren and unused.

What is needed is a national-scale participatory mapping project to determine which areas are acceptable sites for plantation expansion and development, incorporating such factors as the location of forests of high conservation value and traditionally owned land.

As the global demand for palm oil has increased, so has the extent of land under palm oil cultivation. The amount of idle land available for development is likely to be over four times the current planted area, and so could accommodate industry expansion for some years to come. In the meantime, we need more research into how to increase productivity and efficiency on existing plantations. Oil palms produce the greatest yield per hectare relative to other oilseed crops such as soy, but a large proportion of existing plantations could benefit from adopting better policies and practices which would increase their output further.

Can you explain what you mean when you write that peat-swamp forests “play a major role in carbon sequestration... [but] palm oil is concurrently promoted as a carbon emission-reducing fuel.”

This is a significant Catch 22 situation. While it is true that increased use of biofuels will help reduce carbon emissions, this doesn't quite add up when you consider the amount of forested land that has been cleared to produce the raw materials for the biofuels.

as a cheap method of land clearance for palm oil development, hit a relatively small area of peat swamp in Indonesia, but were responsible for the single largest anthropogenic carbon release in history. Now much larger areas are at risk; when a deforested swamp is drained, oxidation of carbon begins. The global environmental benefits of preserving peat swamp forests far outweigh the carbon-savings that could be made from clearing the forests and growing oil palms.

Can't we just turn our attention to another source for biofuel, such as corn or soybeans?

One of the primary reasons that the campaign has specifically not called for a boycott of palm oil, or companies using palm oil in their products,

## AN ETHANOL-DEPENDENT WORLD



is that this kind of action would almost inevitably encourage companies to switch to other oils. In the case of soybeans, these tend to be grown under a plantation model similar to oil palms – huge monocultures, often at the expense of tropical forests in South America. We do not want to save the Southeast Asian rainforests from conversion at the expense of those in South America. Oil palms



have far greater yields per hectare than any other oil seed, including soy, so actually provide the most land-efficient source of biofuels. Even more land would undergo monoculture cultivation if we were to rely on other crops in order to meet biofuels targets. Additionally, the EU is only one out of the top three palm oil importers worldwide – markets in India and China are unlikely to be as concerned about the source of the commodity, and so the forest conversion will continue as long as it remains profitable.

What has been the response to your report?

There has been a very mixed response. Inaccurate media coverage initially led to the misperception that the groups involved were calling for a boycott of the palm oil industry, and this in turn has led to the groups involved being publicly branded as “terrorists” by certain palm oil industry bodies.

However, the report was actually released as part of a campaign in the UK to encourage companies to join the RSPO and demonstrate a commitment to sourcing palm oil from non-destructive sources. There is currently such a small amount of “sustainable” palm oil on the market that it is not possible for the manufacturers, retailers or biofuels companies on the RSPO to claim that the palm oil in their products is “sustainable.” The fact that a number of top UK retailers have joined the RSPO due to growing consumer pressure demonstrates to the industry at large that there is a market for

**Jim Motavalli**

Of course, membership of the RSPO is merely the first step – we will be monitoring companies’ activities and encouraging them to actively engage with other RSPO members to find solutions to the environmental and social problems hitherto intimately associated with the industry. 🐼

Peterse is the Programme Manager for Low Carbon Cars, T&E European Federation for Transport and Environment. He says that if the EU does not distinguish between good and bad biofuels, we will be moving toward environmental catastrophe.

What do you see as the main issue(s) in the current debates about biofuels?

It should be made clear that, from a sustainability point of view, there are “good” and “bad” biofuels, in terms of how they are produced. That notion seems to be largely absent from the debate until now. It is logical then that the first thing to do is develop a system of sustainability standards for biofuels and of safeguards to back them up.

What biofuels, in your view, are bad and which are good and by what criteria do we judge this (you mentioned the way they were produced, but could you be more specific)?

As I said, there are no generally accepted criteria for “good” and “bad” in biofuels. We know more or less what can go wrong with the production of biofuels. Birdlife International, for instance, has

described cases of large-scale destruction of pristine landscapes in Brazil and Indonesia to allow growth in production of biomass for biofuels.

Competition with rival claims of land is also a problem that is associated with the introduction of the use of biofuels in Europe. And, “well-to-wheel” analyses have shown that the CO<sub>2</sub> balance of the use of biofuels (the actual net reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions realised by using biofuels instead of fossil fuel) varies widely. There is, however, undeniably some positive potential in the use of biofuels, if this is done responsibly. That is why we are working with Birdlife International and the European Environment Bureau (EEB) on a conference to be held on June 7 called “What Can Go Wrong With The Use Of Biofuels, and What To Do About It.” We are also working together in this with representatives of the most directly involved industries.

Do you find that the current EU focus on biofuel is drawing away attention from the fact that the EU is not meeting the fuel efficiency standards it set for itself in 1996?

That is a big risk. The proposal to allow biofuel-adaptable cars to count for reaching the industry’s CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets is a case in point. It would mean that we would settle for lower fuel efficiency standards for new cars. It should, instead, be emphasised that for transport at least, the drive for fuel efficiency comes first. A more efficient car uses less of any fuel.

In a recent T&E Bulletin you said that “the benefits [of biofuels] will only be delivered if the production of biofuels is sustainable in terms of its impact on biodiversity, water and soil.” Is this not the case now?

Introducing biofuels on a large scale in the absence of such standards [of what are good and bad biofuels], will mean that the global market will do its work unchecked and that, consequently, the cheapest form of biofuel will find its way to our internal combustion engines, regardless of how it is produced. What worries us is that the European Commission does not see this as a high priority problem.

Do you think that European governments and the transport sector are seeing biofuels as a “saviour” rather than just one possible alternative?

One does get that impression. Occasionally things are being put in the right perspective, however. That was the case, for instance, at the February 27 launching event of the Alliance for Synthetic Fuels in Europe in which a handful of oil companies and car makers cooperate. On this occasion, the production of synthetic fuels (that constitutes one way of converting biomass into engine fuel) was presented as a viable contribution, among others, to reducing oil dependence and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Not more, not less. I liked that.

Can we expect this alliance – made up of Shell, Chevron and some automobile companies – to significantly address the fundamental issue of



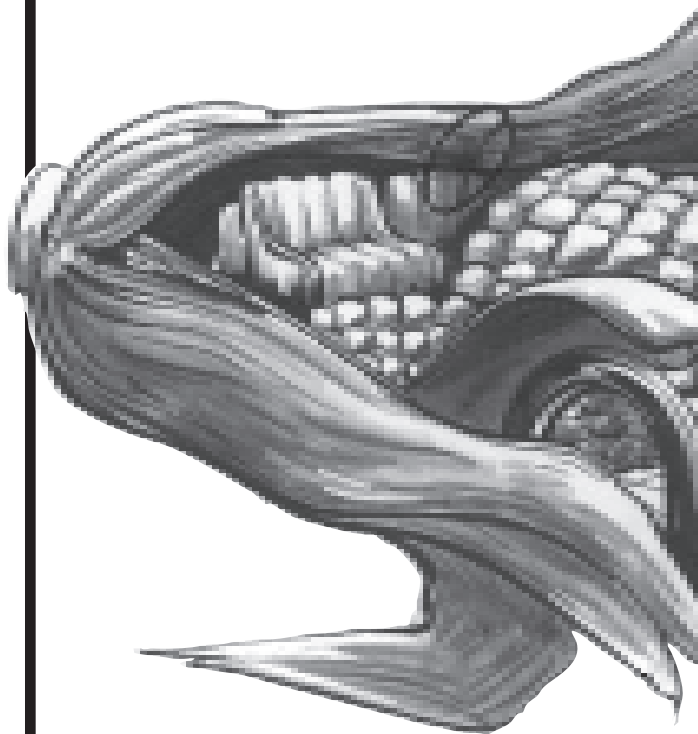
# The Writing on the Wall

compiled by  
Vincent Aronio

## Synthetic Fuels

Synthetic fuels are produced from synthetic gas obtained from natural gas (gas-to-liquid, GTL) or coal (coal-to-liquid, CTL). Synfuels can also be made from biomass. Their properties are similar to diesel fuels, and they provide the same amount of energy as diesel, 25% more than gasoline.

- ✓ Synfuels are extremely low in sulphur, aromatics and toxics. GTL is the most commercially advanced and can be blended with conventional diesel to make a cleaner diesel. Sweden is currently running a train on biogas, methane made from the anaerobic digestion of biomass waste such as cow entrails. The decomposed and composted waste becomes fuel for Sweden's biogas train and almost 800 buses.
- ✗ Although there are vast deposits of coal in countries like the United States, CTL is much less energy-efficient than other fuels and increases total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



## Hydrogen

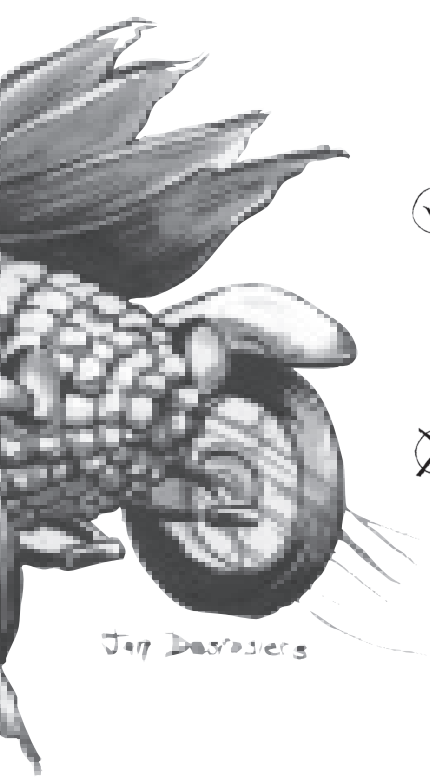
Hydrogen can be used as a fuel to power vehicles. It is obtained from water through the process of electrolysis by which water (H<sub>2</sub>O) is split into oxygen and hydrogen using electricity. It is then used in hydrogen cars as fuel.

- ✓ Hydrogen cars emit no tailpipe pollution and are noise-free. Because hydrogen can be continuously produced and is in abundant quantity, it is hailed by some as the most promising alternative fuel.
- ✗ The technology for hydrogen to be a viable alternative will probably not exist until around 2030. Also, extracting hydrogen from water by electrolysis is extremely energy intensive. Replacing half of US ground transport with hydrogen by 2025 would require as much electricity as is used in the US today. Compressing hydrogen to manageable levels requires 5,000 pounds per square inch of pressure, introducing a whole new range of accidents, in addition to the danger surrounding hydrogen leaks. Finally, the focus on hydrogen, suggests Joseph Romm in his article "The Hype about Hydrogen" in Science & Technology, undermines other efforts at reducing CO<sub>2</sub>. The United Nations Environment Programme reiterates that there are "widespread misunderstandings" about hydrogen's role on a large scale.

## Liquefied Gas

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is extracted from crude oil or natural gas. It is a mixture of light hydrocarbons, especially gases such as propane, methane and butane. The gas is usually stored in liquid form, either pressurised or chilled. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is created by cooling the gas.

- ✓ These fuels are a lot cleaner-burning than petrol or coal because they include fewer toxic chemicals. LPG is a viable alternative, LPG cars are already commercially available and it is one of the cheapest fuels available, around half the price of petrol and diesel.
- ✗ Like fossil fuels, LNG and LPG are non-renewable sources of energy. Moreover they are highly flammable and consequently highly dangerous. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global climate change in case of accidental release.



# Ethanol

Ethanol is made from renewable crops such as maize or sugarcane or biomass. It is widely used in Brazil (derived from sugarcane) and in the US (derived from maize). Ethanol is often blended with petrol in various combinations.

✓ It is much cleaner burning than conventional fuel and comes from a renewable resource. In Brazil, 2/3 of cars use ethanol. The system is effective because it uses part of the sugarcane to fuel the distillation process. Since 1980, US maize farmers increased their yields from 100 to 140 bushels, using 20% to 25% less fertilisers, herbicides and insecticides. Cellulosic ethanol, such as from switch-grass, is touted by the US because the unusable parts of the grass, like Brazil's ethanol, can fuel the distillation process.

✗ Ethanol provides 25% less energy per gallon than gasoline, which is why it is blended with gasoline. Although Brazil's ethanol programme is widely praised, and US automotive companies are championing ethanol derived from maize, there are many problems. Soil erosion in Brazilian sugar cane fields is five times the rate of soil formation; in US maize fields it is 18 times. The water used to produce a year's worth of ethanol could supply 13,800 people with drinking water for a year. The Pamalal Forest in Brazil, the biggest wetland in the world, is expected to disappear by 2050 due to sugarcane growing. Finally, the US maize industry is heavily subsidised to the tune of US\$4 billion to \$5 billion per year.

The Car Talk Committee writes that US\$850 million would be needed to start commercial production of cellulosic ethanol.

A study published in BioScience found that if all Brazilian cars ran on ethanol, the country's ecological footprint would be 6.8 million hectares smaller than if they ran on regular gasoline. However, 34.4 million hectares would be required to offset the soil erosion and preserve biodiversity.

**W**hy provide positive benefits to fuels that will only perpetuate further car use?

With this fuel spread, we wanted to show that there are significant benefits to, for example, running a car on used cooking oil, or a train on biogas derived from our garbage, particularly when the alternative to this is nuclear energy.

But at the same time, we want to show that for some of the fuels most widely praised in the media, like ethanol or hydrogen, there exist significant economical, technical, and environmental barriers to their widespread use.

As countries grasp for alternatives to their dependence on foreign oil, they are easily dazzled by the latest techno-fix on offer from an industry driven by research and development.

We thus provide this overview, so when Carbusters readers find themselves locked in a debate, they will have a few facts and figures to win over their car driving opponents.

# Biodiesel

Biodiesel (methyl ester or ethyl ester) is produced by a condensation reaction of a fatty oil with alcohol (either methanol or ethanol). A variety of vegetable or animal oils can be used, such as rapeseed, soybean, sunflower or oil palm. Through this process, the oil molecules are altered to become smaller and the oil can be used in the same way as conventional diesel fuel.

✓ Biodiesel can be used in most regular diesel engines and can be up to 85% CO<sub>2</sub> neutral. Vehicles throughout North America and Europe are running on spent cooking oil, which would otherwise have been wasted.

✗ It has been calculated that, if 30% of arable land of the earth was planted with biodiesel rapeseed, this would cover only 8% of car use. Furthermore, per capita available cropland globally has decreased 20% in the last decade. The use of monoculture, fertilisers, etc., for growing such a large amount of biofuel crops would be an environmental disaster. There are issues of using land for fuels, instead of planting food for a global population when many are malnourished. In the UK, waste cooking oil will only cover 1/380 of the country's transport needs. Finally, according to David Pimentel of Cornell University, plants capture only 1/10 of 1% of the solar energy reaching a hectare of land.



# Read the Label

## Don't Buy: Buyer Beware: Warning Labels for Cars?

by Debra Efroymson

**A** new international treaty ratified by governments around the world commits them to banning car advertisements, regularly raising taxes on cars and fuel, banning the use of cars in public places, and other measures, including warning labels, designed to greatly reduce car use and promote alternatives."

Wouldn't it be nice to wake up and read this in the morning newspaper? When will this be? And if it can happen with tobacco control, why not with cars?

Do we need these regulations and labels? Aren't people already well aware of the problems caused by cars? Unfortunately, people tend to place the blame on factors other than the car itself. Car crashes are usually termed accidents, suggesting that they could have been avoided but for certain circumstances (e.g.: drunkenness, weather, engineering problems), not that manipulating a vehicle weighing over one ton is inherently dangerous. Cars' contribution to climate change is usually explained away as a fuel problem to be solved with new or existing technologies – but never by the "technology" of cycling or walking.

People also find it difficult to believe that anything genuinely harmful can be freely traded and advertised. Guns, despite killing far fewer people than cars (wars included), are not widely advertised or easily available, nor are people usually allowed to carry them around. Illegal drugs are illegal for a reason. Many chemicals are banned. But cars? And so people tend to believe that the hazardous nature of cars is limited and of no great concern; not only does "everyone drive," but governments accept and even promote the use of cars...so how harmful can they be?

Putting warning labels on car ads would thus serve not only to inform potential consumers, but also to indicate that governments are finally taking the harm caused by cars seriously, and acting to limit their use.

What precedents exist for such a campaign?

An international treaty (the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, or FCTC) has been signed by 168 countries and ratified by 124. Many of these countries are now revising their laws to ban tobacco promotion, make public places smoke-free, put stronger warnings on tobacco products, and work with other countries to reduce tobacco use. If such a treaty can be enacted for tobacco, why not for cars? The point is not to compare smoking to driving, or asking whether smokers have a place in the carfree movement. Rather we should ask: If we saw such international action for cars, we would be a long way towards achieving our goals. What then are the similarities?

Tobacco kills far more people each year than car crashes, but this simple fact belies the many other problems caused by cars, as well as the fact that many accident victims are not using the product themselves. Both products emit pollutants that are harmful for the environment as well as for health, and they impair people's free movement. In terms of damage to the environment, cars clearly far outweigh tobacco.

Both tobacco and cars have extremely powerful multinational companies actively lobbying against controls on their use.

As with tobacco, car use will not be reduced without strict government policies. In neither case will public education alone be sufficient. The same policies that have been proven to work to reduce tobacco use<sup>1</sup> are likely to be similarly successful with cars, e.g.:

- Price measures (high taxes on cars, expensive licenses required to purchase a car, high parking fees, possibly congestion charges);
- Requiring equal time in media outlets that run car ads for non-car and/or pro-human powered transport, leading to a complete ban on all forms of promotion;
- Restrictions on where the product can be used (making areas carfree);

# want to

Dear Anna,  
Lately I have been going out less, not enjoying dinners out at my favourite local restaurants, and skipping out on theatre and live music as it seems I am dumping all my money into my car. How is it possible that a car can be so expensive?

Signed,  
Broke

Dear Broke,  
Car ownership costs are massive, but very few drivers bother to add them up or consciously choose between being carfree or a car owner.

British families spend more on motoring than any other item, including food or housing – 18%, or one in every six pounds! Fuel, parking and toll costs are rising. Also consider that personal car costs are much less than those faced by society in road deaths and injuries, pollution, etc.

Marginal costs vary with use – costs such as fuel, parking, tolls, congestion charges, fines and wear and tear. You save these when you phone, text, e-mail, write, walk, cycle or share a lift instead of driving. Even paying for public transport instead may be cheaper, for instance in a congestion charging zone (£8 for Central London).

Marginal costs are less than half of total costs of car ownership, according to the UK Inland Revenue tax allowances: £0.20 compared to £0.45 a mile.

By getting rid of or avoiding buying a car, total savings are huge – around a day's net wages a week. This is especially true of second cars, which are not nearly as economically crucial in terms of accessing a living wage.

So what do you want from life? Do you each need a car or would you rather go part-time, do work that you love at a lower wage, have a child, a better home closer to town or perhaps buy convenience like being close to restaurants?

"Need" depends on how often you must drive, if there is no other viable choice for an essential trip. When driving requirements drop to less than every other day, not to own a car will be the best decision you've ever made. I'm deliberately carfree and so don't need to worry whether my car is safe from accident or theft, and don't deal with maintenance, tax, insurance, cleaning, parking or when to replace it.

Fortunately, not owning a car doesn't mean that you can't occasionally use one. Taxis are viable and affordable for doing the weekly food shopping in an urban area. Or use delivery and save time, too!

Too many cars already compete for the same road space. There are spare seats. Many websites offer lift share matching (e.g.: [Liftshare.com](http://Liftshare.com)) or ask friends or colleagues.

Could you share ownership with a relative or partner and save over £1,000 a year each for two sharers? Consider how it would work (e.g.: bookings and payment) with advice from Smart Moves – see [www.smartmoves.co.uk/publications](http://www.smartmoves.co.uk/publications).

Remarkably, hiring a car even every other weekend is cheaper than ownership. Many firms offer



# just call

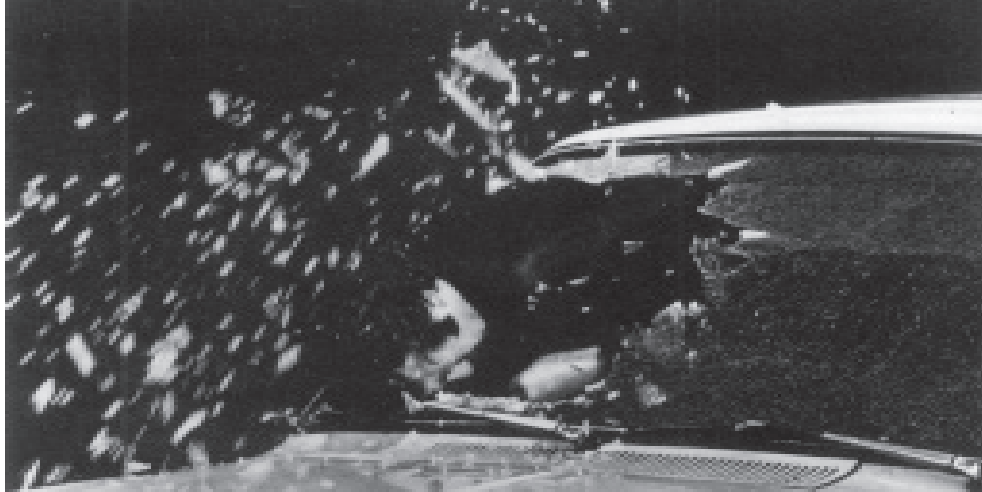
discounts. Hiring cuts ownership hassles. Plus you always get a modern, fuel-efficient vehicle with a good stereo.

Car clubs suit people who want to rent by the hour. Clubs have a choice of vehicles pre-booked by phone or Internet ([Carclubs.org.uk](http://Carclubs.org.uk)). Car owners who became car club members save over £1,400 a year.

The most expensive aspect of ownership is depreciation or loan repayments. Other fixed costs include tax, insurance, breakdown membership, motoring standard test fee (MOT), garaging, yearly parking permits, lost savings interest – and also the income tax paid on the extra money earned to afford the car!

Carfree people buy a careful mix of transport items, such as better shoes, waterproofs, cycling gear, public transport, car hire and taxis. Some of these wouldn't otherwise have been worthwhile, but if you don't sink money into your own metal box, a bus ticket





# Top 10 Myths About the Carfree Movement, Part II

In A long-time carfree activist shatters the outsider's view of what we stand for

by Randy Ghent

**O**ften, when people hear the word carfree, all kinds of ideas come to their minds, not all of them accurate or fair. This two-part article attempts to address those misconceptions.

**Myth 5: The Automobile is an Object and Not a System**  
"I guess you don't want a lift then, since you don't like cars."

If we saw the automobile as a system, like the Communist system, we would not equate reluctant participation with approval. Just as people in former Communist countries were not hypocrites for opposing the regime while relying upon it to put food on the table, there is no contradiction in reluctantly using the car when and where it has genuinely become the only viable option.

A regime is a system imposed from above – one does not always have the luxury of non-participation. Still, one's opposition to the regime is crucial, as acceptance precludes action, and even desire for change. "Dissidents" must support and use non-automotive transportation options whenever possible – not for them to remain "alternatives," but for them to strengthen and gradually assert

the leading role.

An "alternative" is like the short shelf of expensive produce labeled organic surrounded by rows of cheaper produce that is never honestly labeled as toxic. If we were to imagine a reasonable agricultural system, all produce would be organic – and need no label – and it would be unthinkable for people to eat poisoned produce.

With a carfree system, people would maintain complete freedom of movement, but their daily wants and needs would be close at hand. People would no longer be forced to travel to destinations placed tauntingly out of reach of their feet. The allocation of street space would prioritise human interaction over movement, and the permitted transport modes would be chosen for their low speed and space efficiency. The pedestrian would be both king and queen.

It is not important whether we like or dislike cars as objects, though we should not glorify them or accord them status. What does matter is that we recognise the fundamentally destructive nature of the automobile-based transportation and land use system, as well as the possibility and desirability of a carfree system to replace it.

If we treat cars as objects, we tend to fail to make certain important links. We might forget, for example, that cars are

produced by one of the world's most powerful industries, an industry that seeks to maintain and expand its power, and which in turn has led to the automobile's monopoly on movement and road space. By buying a car, no matter how "green" it is labeled, we are reinforcing the industry's power. Any reasonable hope of turning things around requires dumping the auto industry off its throne.

**Myth 4: Proposing Carfree Over Car-lite is Purist**

"I'm a realist. I just want there to be far fewer cars, and then everything will be okay."

Some people who support a reduction in car use or car ownership believe that carfree proponents suffer from an ineffectual, unrealistic, utopian end-state fascination.

The first half of the accusation is unfair as it ignores the successes of the past decade, in which a dozen carfree residential developments have been successfully built. If we are really so ineffectual, then how did they come into being? Is it really so unrealistic to expect these successes to be built upon? After all, people pay premium prices to live on carfree streets where they do exist.

The "end-state fascination" part of the argument fails to recognise the fundamental difference between carfree and car-lite

areas (places that permit cars in a limited way).

It can be demonstrated that a “car-lite” area doesn’t offer the full advantages that a carfree area would, because the exclusion of cars allows for a qualitatively different sort of space. A green space between buildings is a perfect example. University campuses are full of them. Where there might otherwise be a road, there is just a path winding its way through a park-like environment. If a road had been built between those buildings, no matter how few cars actually used it, the environment would be categorically different. The park-like atmosphere would be lost.

A similar point can be made for entire cities. When cities are built to human proportions, the passing of a car requires pedestrians to step aside, and vendors to move their wares. The impact of a single car’s presence can be strongly felt.

So if it is “end-state fascination” to insist on an environment in which the car is both unnecessary and a negative presence, we should plead guilty. It is vital to focus on the end goal, and to understand what benefits would be sacrificed through compromise.

By saying that car-lite is better than carfree, the argument also unintentionally suggests that cars should be permitted to all the places where we have prohibited them – pedestrianised streets, parks, green spaces, our own living rooms, Venice... The unstated argument would go: “We have exactly the right amount of carfree space in our town. We can have no more and no less.” This is extreme conservatism for its own sake – either a fear of any change whatsoever or a lack of imagination. It avoids any analysis of what existing car-permitting areas might be improved through conversion to carfree areas, no matter how obvious the benefits.

### Myth 3: Carfree Streets are Commercial Streets

“I don’t want more pedestrianisation in X-town

because the chain stores would just take over.”

It is excusable to assume that by pedestrianising a street, it will end up looking like an outdoor shopping mall. After all, most European and North American carfree streets are in fact commercial.

Even above street level, rents in carfree areas may rise due to the increased quality of the street environment, leading to gentrification: Offices replace residential units, and upscale apartments replace low and middle income housing.

This trend may develop initially, if nothing is done to counteract the effect, but there is also a limit to the amount of high-end retail that a town or city can support.

It depends on many factors, including local income levels and the proximity of existing high-end shopping areas.

The more that carfree areas are expanded, the more room for diversity there is. Intelligent zoning can support the process, supporting mixed-use – a combination of retail, office and residential spaces, as well as non-commercial destinations. In other words, the municipality or local authority may stipulate for example that the ground floor of a particular building is to be for retail, the second floor for offices, and the third and fourth floors for apartments.

It may be, however, that local residents favour non-commercial uses of the ground floor, such as libraries, schools and centres of nonprofit activity – whether it be for clubs, organisations, classes, community meetings, recreation or otherwise. These can add much more to quality of life than a row of shops would.

Residents may also have ideas for non-commercial use of former street space once the cars have been removed.

In fact, they may only agree to the carfree conversion because of the benefits of these facilities – community gardens, playgrounds, gathering places, sport facilities, stages for concerts or film screenings, etc.

And of course if a street is zoned as primarily residential, it’s not going to turn into a shopping mall if residents succeed in making it carfree. The former fishing villages of the Yorkshire coast, for example, have many carfree residential streets today and throughout the past centuries.

Carfree areas are not limited to any prescribed plan; their potential is limited only by our collective imagination.

### Myth 2: Carfree Living Isn’t Realistic in Today’s World

“You just want to turn back the clock.”

In today’s world – at least the modernised Western world – whether in towns, cities or rural areas, car trips can be roughly broken down into a ratio of 40:40:20. That is, 40% of existing car trips could easily be made by other means; and the next 40% could be made without a car if many small changes were made in infrastructure, services and schedules. The last 20% of car trips are currently difficult or impossible to make without a car, due to the automobile system having limited our choices – by having increased distances or eliminated carfree options.

The only place left to buy paint and wallpaper may be 15 km away, a “big box store” with a large car park on the edge of the motorway, and the distance is too great and the streetscape too hostile to comfortably cycle there, even if you did have access to a bike trailer. And the horse carts or work bikes that carry heavy

“ Some people believe that carfree proponents suffer from an ineffectual, unrealistic, utopian end-state,”

by Olly Powell

# Re-Cycling

**W**ill anyone agree to travel, this summer, from Peking to Paris, by motor car?"

These words appeared in an editorial in the French newspaper *Le Matin* on January 31, 1907. They were to spark an adventure that would capture the imagination of Europe for years to come.

At the time, cars were best known for breaking down and stranding their passengers miles from town, to be



ridiculed by passers-by. To most, the prospect of driving 14,000 km without reliable roads, maps or support was stupendous. To manufacturers and would-be competitors, it was a chance to re-shape the image of the motor car.

On June 10, eleven men in five vehicles rolled out of the French legation in Peking, beginning one of the most remarkable motoring events in history. They were then hauled up the Kalgan Mountains north of Beijing by human and animal power before crossing the Gobi Desert, where several competitors ran out of fuel and almost died of thirst. Four men were saved by passing camel caravans or horses bringing fuel and water.

Once out of the Gobi, they battled endless bogs and Siberian summer rain. Many skeptics of the event had assumed that on reaching Siberia they would abandon the drive and return to Europe in the comfort and style of the recently completed Trans-

Siberian Express. Instead, they obtained permission to drive on the railway line.

Later, the heaviest of the vehicles and its occupants were almost destroyed as a wooden bridge gave way beneath them.

The rail connection proved essential again as the car driven by Charles Goddard was carried by train 1,000 km west to fix a broken axle. That done, the car was put on another train and taken back to where he left off.

Eventually, four of the original five vehicles arrived in Europe to a hero's welcome. First to reach Paris was the Italian team of Prince Scorpione Borghese, Luigi Barzini and Ettore Buizzard, whose meticulous planning saw them arrive two weeks before the others. They had proved that, with enough determination, the motorcar could go many places once thought only accessible by more

of Paris recently announced bold new plans to eliminate cars from large parts of the city centre. It is clear that the excitement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be about finding, or rediscovering, better ways to get around.

With this in mind, I submit the following:

"Will anyone agree to travel without automobile, in the summer of 2007, from Beijing to Paris?"

In June 2007, a group of adventurers intend to begin a carfree journey from Beijing to Paris. We will each choose our own route, the only rule being: no cars or "support vehicles." The 1907 event was a statement about future changes to transport, and so shall be ours.

Most of us will therefore be on bicycles. They will range from conventional diamond-frame touring bikes to a home-built recumbent boosted by state-of-the-art, thin-film silicon solar cells. I have been busy trying to develop both the recumbent and the solar cells for the past year.



conventional modes of travel.

One hundred years later the dream of auto-mobility celebrated by Prince Borghese and his colleagues has turned sour. Beijing is in gridlock and choked in exhaust fumes, while the mayor

Those not into epic long-distance cycling expeditions can of course take the train, sail, walk or use any other combination of carfree transport. Even the original event made use of such modes; it was not until later in



# Studies & Reports



## Just How Congested Are Our Roads?

Mobility problems have increased at a relatively consistent rate during the last two decades. Traffic congestion today is an everyday fact of life in many towns and cities. In the 2005 Urban Mobility Report, you can find an examination of congestion and its indirect effects.

Congestion problems occur in many ways. Some congestion is determined by the design of an area, some is determined by accidents or is the result of decisions about investment levels.

However, congestion continues to grow in all urban areas, more severely in larger areas, and affects more roads, trips and times of day. In the US in 2003, congestion led to 3.7 billion hours of travel delay and 2.3 billion gallons of wasted fuel, an increase of 79 million hours and 69 million gallons from 2002 to a total cost of more than US\$63 billion.

The report also shows that "the current pace of transportation improvement is not sufficient to keep pace with even a slow growth in travel demands in most major urban areas. As a consequence, not only is there a need for more capacity but also for greater efficiency of the existing transport network, especially in terms of public transport.

The report can be found on the web at <[www.mobility.tamu.edu/ums/report](http://www.mobility.tamu.edu/ums/report)>.

## Flight of Fancy?

In March 2006, The Economist published an article examining new energy technologies for airplanes. Following the example of hybrid cars, which run on both electricity and fossil fuels, attention is now turning to hybrid planes.

As with cars the external costs of aviation are very high in terms of aircraft noise, emissions, and energy use. The article focuses on this last point and on new ways of making planes more efficient, improving performance and durability, and possibly also reducing weight.

The approach is different than with hybrid cars, with a system based on fuel cells combining hydrogen with oxygen in order to produce electricity. Fuel cells have strong advantages over combustion: they are quiet, efficient, and produce far fewer emissions.

Technology currently being developed should be able to increase the efficiency of converting fuel into energy from today's 15% to as much as 70%.

Although both rival companies Airbus and Boeing are looking at fuel cell technology in a "fairly intensive way," the technology is still only at the stage of laboratory tests and preliminary design work. Scientists expect the technology to take hold in cars first, before spreading into planes.

- Economist.com

## Immediate Positive Impact

Since last month, when the city of Stockholm instituted a toll similar to the London congestion charge introduced in February 2003, Stockholm has seen a drop in car journey times and a shift onto public transport. The number of cars travelling to or from the centre is down by 25%, even 35%

in some places. "This is beyond our expectations, and the system is also working well technically," said a finance ministry expert.

Most notably, "the public transport company, which made extra capacity available as the charge began, has reported increased usage and no problem with overcrowding."

The Swedish charge is a seven-month experiment that will end in July, after which there will be a referendum on whether to continue with it.

- T&E Bulletin

## Ambient Air Quality in Europe

A new study by the European Environmental Bureau presents the results of an environmental NGO questionnaire on air quality management plans in 28 cities of the European Union. The conclusions are not very encouraging. Indeed, given the serious health problems caused by fine and coarse particles, member states clearly have not done enough to implement this directive and to meet the legally binding limits in 2005.

Most plans were made too late, although the problem should have been apparent since 2002 at least.

Furthermore, many plans are not concrete enough and lack dedicated financing, which makes it unlikely that the measures will be put into practice. NGOs emphasise that much larger sums are spent on road expansion and that road infrastructure takes priority over investment in other modes of transport.

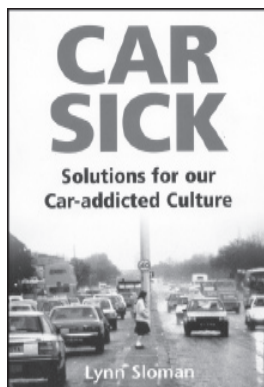
Regarding the implementation of this directive, it is important to make sure that the plans are effective and that the measures are implemented.

It is the obligation of member states to ensure good implementation at the local level, but also to complement local policies with national policies that will actually help cities to reduce pollution. The full report can be



# Reviews

**Car Sick: Solutions for Our Car-Addicted Culture**  
Lynn Sloman, Green Books, 2006  
ISBN 1-903998-76-X



My initial reaction to hearing about *Car Sick* was a combination of curiosity and dread. Curiosity, because it is always interesting to hear a

new perspective, when you've already read a number of books on the topic. Dread, because the title is off-putting. Who, after all, would want to read a book called *Car Sick*? And is this what we really need – yet another book critiquing car culture?

The tinge of nausea soon passed. It turned out that, beyond the front cover, *Car Sick* is very positive, useful and timely. I reminded myself that this book is aimed at Britain, where a book of similar scope has not been released since Nicola Baird's *The Estate We're In* (1998). Sloman has a well-established background as a transport researcher, consultant and advisor, and she served as

assistant director of the nonprofit group Transport 2000 for ten years. Yet her writing style is accessible to the general public as well as planners and decision-makers.

Sloman is abundantly clear that our society's "car sickness" cannot be reduced to matters of pollution and congestion. Quoting World Carfree Network advisor John Adams, she wants to offer people above all the opportunity to "live in a cleaner, quieter, more peaceful, beautiful, harmonious and neighbourly world" instead of a "dirty, dangerous, noisy, ugly, bleak, brutish, socially polarised, fume-filled greenhouse." And she knows, based on a number of reliable surveys, that this is what most people want, even if it means making car use less convenient.

Snippets of other studies and surveys, as well as interviews, are sprinkled throughout the book. Particularly interesting were the tales of carfree residents of rural Wales, where Sloman herself also lives carfree, and the psychological profiling of car drivers, half of whom are receptive to the idea of reducing car dependence if the alternatives are workable.

(The other half, I might add, are not itching for their car keys

when they visit somewhere such as Venice, where the benefits of a carfree environment are clearly visible.)

Those workable solutions are the focus of the book. For the most part these are local initiatives that have proved successful, and which, in combination, could have profound positive effects. For example, London is the only region of the UK where there's an authority (Transport for London) to ensure, despite privatisation, that various public transport services are integrated and provide quality service. Elsewhere much is left to the whim of individual bus and train companies, which tend to emphasise profits over convenient A to B service.

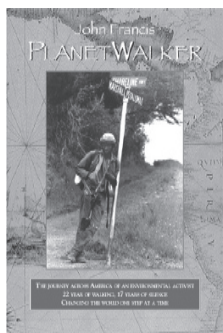
In another example, 90% of the visitors to Britain's National Trust sites get to these historic homes and gardens by car. But when one such site promotes itself as a carfree destination, and offers public transport service instead of a car park, the latest figures show that two-thirds of visitors (people who normally drive) are arriving there by foot, cycle or bus. What Sloman doesn't say is even more promising, if obvious: When no possibility of car access exists, such as at any historic site in Venice, 100% of

## Car Sick: Excerpt

Many of us are aware that our reliance on cars is causing the climate to change. We know about the destruction of the countryside caused by road building. And yet it is so much easier to put the responsibility for resolving the problem onto someone else – the government, or the train companies, or the local council – than to take a share of the responsibility yourself. If only there was a decent public transport service,

the argument goes, then we wouldn't need to use our cars. But until public transport is better, there is nothing else for it – we'll just have to drive.

**Planetwalker: How to Change Your World One Step at a Time**  
John Francis, Elephant Mountain Press, 2005 ISBN 0-9760192-0-5



John Francis' full response to the 1971 oil tanker spill into the San Francisco Bay was not immediate, but it was determined, sustained

and radical. After several years' thought, he gave up using motorised transport for over two decades and began his walking career.

Most of his early travels sans motor occurred in Northern California, but in 1983 he set off at three or four miles per hour, to make his way across the continental US, stopping in Missoula, Montana, and Madison, Wisconsin, to earn advanced degrees in environmental science and land resources management.

Oh, and he also gave up talking. He decided he was tired

of arguing with people.

Not everyone responded well to either of these decisions. Some strangers and friends accused him of trying to make them feel bad by not using cars and others couldn't understand why, as a black man especially, he would willingly silence himself.

But he credits his silence (he carried a printed explanation of what he was up to, sometimes used pen and paper, but mostly pantomimed to express himself) for being able to connect with people he might not have otherwise, that people were more open when they felt listened to.

With a couple of exceptions, his encounters on his journey were peaceful.

Planetwalker is written in journal form, has time gaps, and is a little short on logistical details, but it appears that he planned his trip similarly to people hiking the entire 2,160-mile Appalachian Trail in the eastern United States, who have supplies sent to them along the way. Francis mails things home to lighten his load and has warmer clothes and other supplies sent ahead. (He

also arranges his study plans in advance.)

His path, however, didn't much resemble the Appalachian Trail. While segments may have gone through national parks, much of his journey was on highways, sometimes the multiple-lane divided ones that are legally off limits to non-motorised travellers.

This occasionally gets him into trouble with the law, though enforcers are often sympathetic to the long distances that detours would require. I don't remember the exact details, but the crossing of a large bridge added drama and was finessed in part by his banjo-playing abilities.

In addition to the banjo, Francis carried a sketchbook and watercolors. The banjo earned him occasional cash and his watercolors and pencil drawings grace the book and made me wonder about so much talent concentrated in one person – though he apparently developed these skills with the same slow, steady effort he used in walking. The writing is also smooth and engaging, with the exception of some sidebars that feel a little

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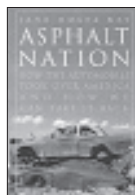
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**[atob@onetel.org](mailto:atob@onetel.org)**

# Resources

## Nonfiction

### Asphalt Nation

*How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back*  
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages  
EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580



*Asphalt Nation* is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, architectural, and personal solutions, Kay shows that radical change is possible.

### Carfree Cities

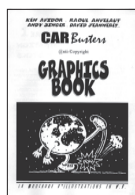
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages  
EUR 30, £21, US\$35, AU\$50, or CZK 890



An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, *Carfree Cities* outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life. It gives practical suggestions for implementing Crawford's carfree design in new and existing cities.

### Car Busters Graphics Book

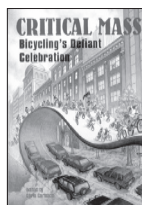
*Car Busters*, 1999, 44 pages  
EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, CZK 150



Our graphics book brings together all the best graphics on file at Car Busters from the artists you see in the magazine. Includes information on how to produce attractive posters and leaflets. The graphics can be reproduced freely (for non-profit purposes) by activist groups for their leaflets, posters, newsletters, etc.

### Critical Mass

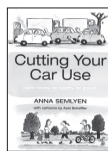
*Bicycling's Defiant Celebration*  
Chris Carlsson, editor, 2002, 256 pages  
EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580



A pushy and irreverent collection of inkworthy social critique and optimistic celebration. Four dozen contributors document, define and drive home the beauty of a quiet ride with a thousand friends, the anarchy of grassroots inspiration, the melodrama of media coverage and the fight for the survival of our cities.

### Cutting Your Car Use

*Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!*  
Anna Semlyen, 2000 / 2005, 160 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, CZK 250  
Britain's first ever personal traffic reduction guide. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give up the car completely. New updated edition.



### Divorce Your Car!

*Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile*  
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages  
EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500  
The ultimate guide to liberating ourselves from our addiction to cars and the automobile culture. Encourages readers to change their own behaviour, and describes how.

### Earth First! Direct Action Manual

DAM Collective, 1998, 152 pages  
EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, or CZK 150  
A comprehensive guide to direct action tactics.

### Ecocities: Building Cities

*in Balance with Nature*  
Richard Register, 2002, 296 pages  
EUR 14.50, £10, US\$17, AU\$23, or CZK 425



A comprehensive collection of well-researched information for concerned citizens from the author of *Ecocity Berkeley: Building Cities for a Healthy Future* and editor of *Village Wisdom: Future Cities*. Here Register, a leading promoter of the idea of "de-paving," presents a set of tools for urban activists to use in shaping the future of their own communities.

### The End of the Road

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250



There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport and re-arranging our lives.

### For Love of the Automobile

*Looking Back Into the History of Our Desires*  
Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover  
EUR 35, £25, US\$40, AU\$68, or CZK 1,180



### Home from Nowhere

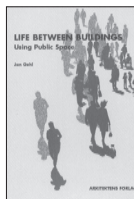
*Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21st Century*  
James Howard Kunstler, 1998, 320 pages  
EUR 14.50, £10, US\$17, AU\$23, or CZK 425



Kunstler offers a way back from the "tragic sprawlscapes of cartoon architecture, junked cities, and ravaged countryside" that he described in *The Geography of Nowhere*. Here he calls for the restoration of traditional architecture, sensible urban design principles, and the development of public spaces for social interaction.

### Life Between Buildings

Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages, fourth English edition  
EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500



A classic is republished and revised. First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. A standard textbook in many architecture and planning schools around the world, it is still the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

### Making Their Own Plans

Brett Bloom and Ava Bromberg, eds., 2004, 128 pages  
EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, CZK 325

A compilation of articles about concrete projects seeking to reconfigure an undemocratic, polluted, gentrifying city into a more just and livable place.

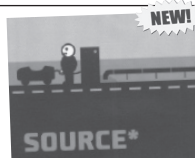
### New City Spaces

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 2001, 263 pages  
hardcover: EUR 50, £35, US\$60, AU\$80, or CZK 1,500  
Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, this informative book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.

### Placemaking Guidebook

Jenny Leis & Daniel Lerch, *City Repair*, 2003, 83 pages  
EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, or CZK 325

Learn how to follow in City Repair's footsteps, building places where community can happen, right in the hearts of our neighbourhoods.



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See video section for details.

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### Public Spaces - Public Life

Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 1996, 96 pages  
EUR 32, £22, US\$38, AU\$50, or CZK 950  
Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished. Street Reclaiming



### Wise Fool Basics

K. Ruby, *Wise Fool*, 1999, 96 pages  
EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, or CZK 325

Giant puppet building, masks, street theatre tips, still making... Full of useful information and inspiration for making direct action imaginative, artistic and endlessly creative.

## Fiction/Kids

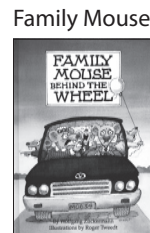
### The Age of the Bicycle

Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250

What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour...

### Alice in Underland

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250



### Family Mouse Behind the Wheel

Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages  
hardcover: EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250  
Colourful illustrated book teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences...

### The Little Driver

Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250

## "Freesources"

A growing selection of free texts available at <www.worldcarfree.net/resources/free.php>:

- *Energy and Equity* by Ivan Illich
- *Hypermobility* by John Adams
- *The Automobile and Décroissance* by Denis Cheynet
- *Time Pollution* by John Whitelegg
- *Depaving the World* by Richard Register
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Michael Hartmann walks straight over the cars illegally parked on the sidewalk. A documentary about a man discharged from a mental hospital for being perfectly (or at least somewhat) normal.

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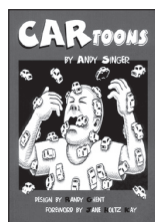
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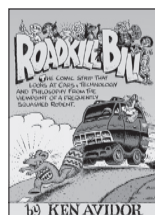


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A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's

infamous graphics.

Roadkill Bill



Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250

It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In *Roadkill Bill*, the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome car-toons are collected together for the first time. Avidor gives voice to the

## Stickers

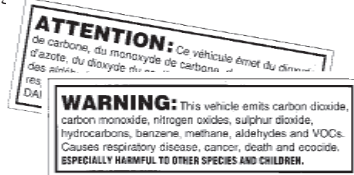
"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

Ten stickers:  
EUR 2, £1.40, US\$2.50, AU\$3.50, or CZK 50  
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"Cancer Warning" Stickers

15 stickers: EUR 3, £2, US\$3.50, AU\$5, or CZK 90  
Big hard-to-remove stickers for cars



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Stop-Sign Improvement

One: EUR 0.85, £0.60, US\$1, AU\$1.30 or CZK 25  
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Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. These big glossy



vinyl stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs.

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Towards Carfree Cities

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Yellow, orange, red, forest green, beige; XS, S, M, L



"Carfree"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Black, red, light blue; men: S, M, L, XL; women: S, M, L



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Payments: Car Busters, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Rep.

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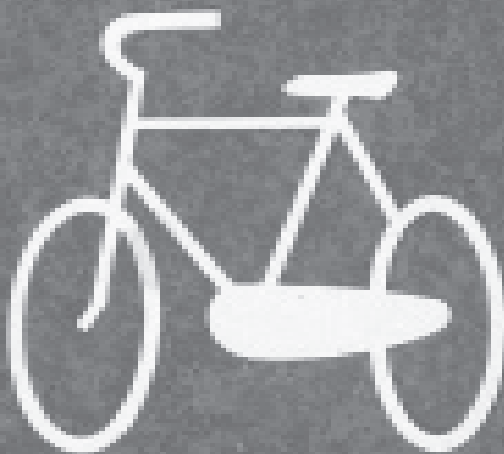
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"Parasites"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Black ink on red shirt, white ink on black shirt; men: S, M, L, XL; women: S, M, L







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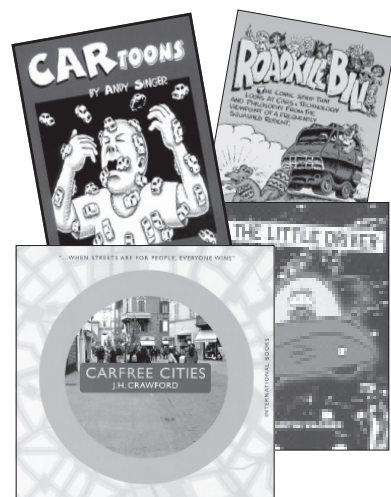
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# Announcements

## Bike Caravan Against G8

The G8 will hold its annual Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, July 15-17. There are plans underway to organise a bike caravan from Berlin to St. Petersburg via Poland and the Baltic states. The goal is to protest against the summit and show alternatives to the system behind it.

At the moment the caravan is still only an idea; input is welcome. The tour would start around June 6 in Berlin. At the moment most of the organisers are people from Western Europe who were active in preparing the bike caravan to G8 in Gleneagles. The team is looking for co-organisers, bike experts, and local people who can help coordinate the 2006 caravan. Tasks include checking possible routes, thinking about campgrounds, hosting the caravan in your town/village, and preparing informational materials in Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Russian.

More information: <g8-2006.plentyfact.net/Cycle\_Caravan>; e-mail: <support-g8caravan@riseup.net>.

## Earth First! Summer Gathering August 16-20, Wales

This is the place where people involved in radical ecological direct action – or those who want to be involved – get together for five days to talk, walk, share skills, learn, play, rant, find out what's going on, find out what's next, live outside, hang out, incite, laugh and conspire. It's also a practical example of non-hierarchical low-impact living in action. It is organised by a diverse community with a wide range of approaches, so there should be plenty to interest and inspire everyone whether you have been active for years or are completely new to it all. More details at <www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk>.

## Camp for Climate Action

## August 26-September 4

There is a growing grassroots movement that challenges the fossil fuel economy. The camp will be a place for this movement to get together. It will be a place for both new people, who have never been "political" before but who want move beyond concern into activity, and for experienced activists as well.

The camp itself will be a mix of workshops, meetings, socialising, information sharing and action. It will be a place that encourages discussion on what we are faced with, what the alternatives are and how we can achieve them.

It will be placed somewhere in the north of England, but the exact place still has not been arranged. People are needed to help!

More info at <www.climatecamp.org.uk>.

## UK Anti-Roads Conference

The second National Anti Roads Conference will take places on June 10 in Birmingham. This is an opportunity for British campaigners against national and local roads to network, share information and learn skills strategies and knowledge for campaigning.

For more info, see <www.roadblock.org.uk/action/2006\_conference.htm>, e-mail <conference@roadblock.org.uk> or call +(44) (0)1453-766447.

## Art Not Oil: Call for Entries

Art Not Oil is an annual event aimed at encouraging artists to create work that explores the damage that oil companies are doing to the planet, and the role art can play in counteracting that damage. Art Not Oil 2006 will include paintings, photos, sculpture and other creations that address issues like climate chaos, corporate sponsorship and greenwash, and the suicidal madness that proclaims "profit is king" and "money can solve any



## World Carfree Day: Sept. 22

If you want to make an impact with a big carfree event in September, now is the time to start planning. If you're looking for inspiration, check out our website at <www.worldcarfree.net/wcfd>. It offers various resources to stimulate new ideas and help your organising effort. On it you will find links to other local organisers, reports from past events that offer creative ideas for events and activities, e-cards you can send to your friends and enemies, and more. Ideas and input are always welcome. World Carfree Day is what you make it!

## Towards Carfree Cities VI:

### Bogotá, September 20-24

Registration is now open for the next Towards Carfree Cities conference, which will take place in Bogotá, Colombia. This will be an opportunity to see first-hand the profound transformation that this city has undergone, and to participate in one of its famous Carfree Sunday events. The organisers, Fundación Ciudad Humana, are also accepting presentation and programme proposals until July 1. More information can be found at <www.worldcarfree.net/conference>.

## Seeking Fundraiser and Magazine Editor

World Carfree Network is seeking an experienced fundraiser with a proven track record to join our Prague-based team full-time from January 2007. We're also seeking an editor for Carbusters magazine; applicants should have journalism and editing experience. For more info on either, write Kamila Blazková at <kamila@worldcarfree.net>.